Local Government Elections Task Force

Elections Task Force: Introduction
- Deliberating and making recommendations on legislation to improve local government elections
- Joint, consensus based body between Province and UBCM
- Provincial members: Bill Bennett, Donna Barnett, Douglas Horne
- UBCM members: Harry Nyce, Barbara Steele, Mary Sjostrom, Robert Hobson (alternate)

Elections Task Force: UBCM
- Collaborative process between UBCM and Province
- UBCM policy guides UBCM’s Task Force members
- Area Association meetings build on March 12 consultation workshop
- Encourage feedback and comments

Elections Task Force: Process
- Public consultation focusing on written feedback
- In addition, specifically sought feedback from:
  - Local governments
  - Province-wide groups – e.g., business and labour reps
  - Election experts – e.g., academics, EBC, and LGMA
  - BC School Trustees
  - Provincial opposition
- March 12, UBCM consultation workshop
- Over 1000 submissions, mainly from individuals
- Website: www.localelectiontaskforce.gov.bc.ca

Elections Task Force: Topics Under Review
- Election cycle (term of office)
- Corporate vote
- Campaign finance – contribution and expense limits, disclosure, public financing, third party advertising, application to other voting
- Enforcement
- Role of Elections BC
- Candidate eligibility of some local government employees

Elections Task Force: Learning That...
- Scope and scale of local government elections are significant
- Vast majority of elections are successfully administered by local governments
- No value in fixing what isn’t broken; need to fill the gaps
- Gaps in key areas – e.g., campaign finance disclosure; enforcement, including compliance advice; education
- Transparency matters
### Elections Task Force: Local Elections Cycles
- **Election cycle** means local government term of office
- Since 1990: 3 year term
- Several Canadian jurisdictions have 4 year term
- Balance efficiency with accountability
- UBCM position: extension to 4 year term

### Elections Task Force: Corporate Vote
- "Corporate vote" means business vote
- No corporate vote in Canada; historically some corporations could vote locally in BC
- Balance representation for business with principles like "one person, one vote"
- UBCM position: against corporate vote

### Elections Task Force: Campaign Contribution Limits
- Would mean restrictions on **who** can contribute and/or **how much** can be contributed
- Currently, regulate **how** contributions are made, accepted, recorded, and disclosed
- Other jurisdictions: approach to contribution limits varies
- UBCM position: no endorsed resolutions; 2009 proposed resolution referred to Task Force

### Elections Task Force: Campaign Expense Limits
- No expense limits locally
- Expense limits in some other jurisdictions and BC provincial elections
- Balance accessibility with administrative burden
- UBCM position: No endorsed resolutions; 2009 proposed resolution referred to Task Force

### Elections Task Force: Campaign Finance Disclosure
- Campaign participants disclose campaign contributions, expenses, surpluses, and deficits
- Balance transparency with administrative burden and accessibility
- Pressure points:
  - Difficulties following/applying disclosure rules
  - Requirements too onerous for small campaigns
  - Requirements not stringent enough
  - Disclosure is too late
  - Disclosure statements not consistently accessible
- UBCM position: no recent endorsed resolutions; 2009 proposed resolution referred to Task Force

### Elections Task Force: Third Party Advertising
- Limit amount spent and/or impose other rules (e.g., sponsorship disclosure)
- Campaign finance disclosure rules apply to "campaign organizers" (3rd party advertisers) spending $500+
- Balance transparency with administrative burden
- UBCM position: endorsed resolution for review of anonymous election advertising
Elections Task Force: Other Voting

- "Other voting" means voting on a matter requiring or seeking elector assent (e.g., referendum)
- BC and most other provinces: campaign finance rules do not apply to local government other voting
- Balance transparency with effectiveness
- UBCM position: no endorsed resolutions; 2009 proposed resolution referred to Task Force

Elections Task Force: Public Financing

- Publicly funding candidates/parties and providing benefits to contributors
- No public financing for local elections; available provincially
- Some public financing in other jurisdictions; typically local funds
- UBCM position: for public financing if funded by Province

Elections Task Force: Enforcement

- Enforcement rules apply to all election activities
- Other jurisdictions: generally same as BC (e.g., variety of bodies)
- Pressure points:
  - Election administration enforcement rules
  - Campaign participant regulation
  - Barriers to enforcement
- UBCM position: no endorsed resolutions

Elections Task Force: Elections BC

- Local governments run all aspects of local elections
- Elections BC administers and oversees provincial elections
- Other jurisdictions: mainly local governments run elections
- Pressure points:
  - Perceived conflict of interest
  - Enforcement of campaign finance rules
- UBCM position: no endorsed resolutions

Elections Task Force: Local Government Employees

- Local government employees ineligible for office in own, or related, local government
- Exception for volunteer firefighters or employees of related local government?
- Balance accessibility with possible conflict of interest
- UBCM position: no endorsed resolutions; 2 2009 proposed resolutions referred to Task Force

Elections Task Force: Key Questions

- How do you think we should fill in the "gaps"?
- What do you think should be done to improve accountability/fairness in campaign finance rules?
- What do you think could be done to improve campaign finance disclosure?
- What do you think could be done to improve how campaign finance or other election rules are enforced?
- What are your views on the other topics under review?
Elections Task Force: Next Steps

- Thank you for your feedback!
- Website: www.localelectionstaskforce.gov.bc.ca
  - Read the discussion papers
  - View feedback received
- Website: ubcm.ca
  - View feedback from March 12 consultation event
- Task Force report to government and UBCM:
  - May 30, 2010